



THE LAUNCH OF THE MUDDLEWICK PAGEANT

by Horry Parsons

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ACT 1

The play takes place in Muddlewick Civic Center, where a dinner has been arranged for potential sponsors, local dignitaries and guests for the purpose of launching a Pageant to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Twisted Bottom, at which King Abared the Unsteady defeated the invading Danes.

Characters in Order of Appearance.

Paul Howard.	Head of Security and Compère at the Dinner
Constance Hobson – Frohoc.	Lady Mayoress
Steven Spinks	Professional Producer
Sybil Priscott	Local W.I. Drama Director
Janis Jessup	Daughter of Local Butcher
Josie Melcraft	Owner of Muddlewick Gift Shop
Mary Mitchell	Lady from the Manse
Tom Miller	Local Farmer
John Stamp.	Boy Scout Leader.
Freda Blunt	Girl Guide Leader

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PAUL (*On left*) Good evening. I am Paul Howard, you may know that I run the Tite Security Agency here in Muddlewick. We have been hired to attend tonight's dinner because the Mayoress intends to bring to tonight's launch the Twisted Bottom Cudgel, and as you are aware, the Cudgel is priceless. As always at any public showing of the Cudgel, I ask that you keep yourselves alert to any unseemly persons or events that may give cause for concern.

I have also been asked to compère tonight's launch and therefore, on behalf of Her Worship the Lady Mayoress and the Town Council I welcome you all to this Gala Dinner marking the Launch of the Muddlewick Pageant which will re-enact the events surrounding the Battle of Twisted Bottom a thousand years ago..

We shall be serving the starters shortly but are just awaiting the arrival of the Mayoress and a few other people including Mr Steven Spinks a professional producer especially employed by the town council to direct the Pageant. (*Mayoress enters down left*) Ah, good evening, Lady Mayoress.

MAYORESS Good evening, Paul, has everybody arrived?

PAUL Well, most of your guests are here and seated.

MAYORESS Good, good, and er! Have you see Mr Spinks, the Producer?

PAUL Not yet, but I shouldn't think he will be much longer. I er! noticed you don't seem to have The Cudgel.

MAYORESS Your senior man, Jim, is looking after it until everyone has arrived. You know how concerned I am about it's security.

PAUL Naturally. A thousand year old, diamond encrusted implement, it's priceless

MAYORESS It is, that's why we only bring it from the Banks Vault on very rare and special occasions such as tonight's launch.

(*Steven Spinks, carrying a shoulder bag, enters up right*)

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STEVEN Excuse me, is this where the Festival Launch is taking place.

MAYORESS Mr Spinks?

STEVEN Yes, please call me Steven, and you must be the Mayoress of Muddlewick?

PAUL Excuse me, Mr Spinks, may I formally introduce you to Councillor Constance Hobson-Frohoc, Lady Mayoress of Muddlewick.

STEVEN How do you do.

MAYORESS I'm so pleased that you have managed to get here to our dinner this evening. You will be aware that this Pageant is unique as far as Muddlewick is concerned.

STEVEN Oh! I wasn't aware of that.

MAYORESS Oh yes. My idea of course. I wanted something special to mark the Millennium of the Battle and the presentation of the Cudgel to the town.

STEVEN It's very exciting, especially as I now know this will be a first pageant for Muddlewick.

MAYORESS Well, I'm thrilled that you have taken on this production and managed to fit in this first visit just one week after your appointment as Executive Producer.

STEVEN I'm anxious to get the script underway and to meet potential cast members and of course the many other helpers required for the Pageant.

MAYORESS Well, most of the guests are here and the others are expected any moment.

STEVEN And, er, did I understand that the Cudgel will be on show this evening.

PAUL It is here and under the safe keeping of my security staff. The Mayoress will be exposing it, er! Showing it, er! You will be able to see it, the Cudgel, later.

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(Sybil Priscott enters up right) Ah. May I introduce Sybil Priscott, this is Steven Spinks, Director of the Pageant.

STEVEN How do you do, er Mrs Priscott?

SYBIL Miss, Miss Sybil Priscott, I should like to inform you that I have been writing and producing the Muddlewick W.I. Pantomime and Festival Drama productions ever since Matilda Matlock had to stand down, well, she laid down actually.

STEVEN Laid down?

SYBIL Yes. After the Chandelier which was the centre piece of her play “Light up my Life” fell on her.

STEVEN How awful, were you in the play?

SYBIL No, I was her stage-manager. I had been her assistant for too many er! For many years.

MAYORESS You could be Stevens stage-manager for the Pageant.

STEVEN Well, I’m not sure about that.

SYBIL Of course not. I thought I could be Co-Director.

MAYORESS Well, Paul, I think we should go and make our selves ready to present the Cudgel. See you soon Steven.

(Mayoress exits down left)

PAUL Would you like me to take your bag Steven.

STEVEN No thank you, I’ll keep it with me.

PAUL Are you sure, it’s no bother to take it for you.

STEVEN No, no, I’d rather keep it nearby thank you.

(Paul exits down left)

SYBIL Now, Steven, I can call you Steven.

STEVEN Er! Of course.

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- SYBIL** Well, Steven, I feel we should open with the warriors coming on up left.
- STEVEN** I really haven't yet considered-----
- SYBIL** Then the lake people enter right led by er! who led the lakes?
- STEVEN** Well, er! I, er! (*Janis Jessup enters up left. Janis unfortunately suffers with a slight lisp, especially noticeable with the letter s*) Oh thank goodness, you are?
- JANIS** Janis Jessup
- STEVEN** Hello Janis. I'm Steven Spinks, and do you live locally?
- JANIS** Yesth. My Dad is Sam Jessup, and we own the best butchers shop in Muddlewick.
- STEVEN** An old fashion Butchers Shop?
- JANIS** Yesth, we still make our own sausages. "Sam's Sausages are Smashing" That's are motto.
- STEVEN** Well, I hope you won't be too busy making sausages to take part in the Pageant.
- JANIS** Shouldn't think so, business is not so good lately.
- STEVEN** But Sam's Sausages are still Smashing?
- JANIS** Yesth, his sausages are smashing but his business has smashed since the Supermarket opened up in Muddlewick
- SYBIL** Never mind, I'm sure taking part in the Pageant will cheer you up. I thought you could be Princess Po-----
- STEVEN** Er, I think I've got to do the casting.
- JANIS** Anyway, I don't want to be a Princess named Po.
- SYBIL** It's Princess Posy if I was allowed to finish. Princess Posy, daughter of Queen Sceemarie, Queen of the Lake people.

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- JANIS** I can't learn lines, and apart from sausage making I haven't many other skills.
- STEVEN** We shall have voice overs so there's no lines to worry about but in any case I haven't even started casting yet.
- SYBIL** No, we haven't started casting yet.
(Josie Melcraft enters up right)
- SYBIL** Good evening, Josie, come and meet Steven Spinks.
- JOSIE** How do you do, I'm Josephine Melcraft, I'm the owner of the Gift Shop here in the middle of Muddlewick, everyone calls me Josie.
- STEVEN** Hello Josie.
- JOSIE** Can I say how pleased we all are that at last the story of the Battle of Twisted Bottom is about to be told.
- JANIS** Yesth, it's about time Twisted Bottom got an airing.
- SYBIL** It's such a wonderful story.
- JOSIE** And are you going to be the stage –manager, Sybil?
- JANIS** Oh, I hope so, especially if there's a chandelier on stage.
- SYBIL** No, I'm not going to be the stage –manager. For one thing, there isn't a stage in a Pageant, and for another thing, for such a large cast it's only fair that I help Steven with the directing.
- JOSIE** I didn't think it would need so many people to tell the story of Twisted Bottom.
- JANIS** Nor did I. Now let's see, there's King Abared the unsteady.
- STEVEN** Abared the Unsteady?
- JANIS** He had a drink problem, then there is his Master at Armes Will Woofers, he had a stink problem, and One Eyed Jack, he had a blink problem, and then there was-----

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SYBIL That's enough, Janis, you're making this up, we have to cast the King and Queen of the Lakes, a Young Prince and Princess, a few courtiers and then as many extras as we can find for Warriors and Townsfolk.

(Mary Mitchell and Tom Miller enter up right)

MARY Hello Sybil, sorry I'm late, the Rover played up I'm afraid, Good evening er!

STEVEN Steven Spinks.

MARY How do you do, Mr Spinks, I'm Mary Mitchell.

STEVEN And er! Mr Mitchell

TOM Cor blimey, I ain't her hubby. I be Tom Miller, farmer, that be Mrs Mitchell from the Manse. I gave her a lift cause her motors up the shoot.

MARY I had to ring Mr Miller and beg help to get here when my car would not start. He kindly picked me up.

TOM No problem. Plenty of room on my tractor for both of us.

MARY Anyway, we're here now. So, Spinks, you'll want me to play Queen of the Lakes of course.

SYBIL We haven't begun casting yet.

STEVEN Ahem, I haven't begun casting yet.

MARY Well you won't find anyone else able to play the queen. I have a tiara, a cloak and everything.

SYBIL Oh yes, you played the Queen of Hearts in the W.I. panto didn't you?

MARY Oh yes, but I would be much more cultured as Queen of the Lakes. I don't suppose you would want me to say things like, "He's behind you" or "Oh yes he did" in your Pageant Mr Spinks.

STEVEN No, I don't think those phrases will be in my script.

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- SYBIL** Of course not, it will be more like “Look out, my liege, lest he’s behind you”
- STEVEN** In any case, as I said, I haven’t cast it yet
- TOM** Good, I spect I shall have to be young Hal.
- JOSIE** Prince Hal, the teenage warrior?
- TOM** Yus, the one that rides off with all the young women.
- MARY** With all the young men in Muddlewick to choose from, why do you think you’ll be cast as Young Prince Hal?
- TOM** Cos I’m the only one with a hoss.
- MARY** You call that old nag of yours a horse?
- JANIS** No he called it a hoss.
- SYBIL** We haven’t decided if we need a hoss, er! horse yet have we Mr Spinks?
- STEVEN** No I haven’t.
- TOM** Never mind that, where’s the Diamond Donger.
- STEVEN** What?
- MARY** The Jewelled Cudgel.
- SYBIL** Paul and Constance are preparing to bring it in.
(John Stamp and Freda Blunt enter up left) John, Freda, come and meet Mr Spinks. Mr Spinks this is Freda Blunt, Girl Guide leader and John Stamp, Master of The Muddlewick scouts. Mr Spinks is here to help produce the Pageant.
- JOHN** Waste of money if you ask me. Pageant, Huh. Why can’t we have a fete like other years?
- FREDA** We are not having a fete because it is a thousand years since the Battle of Twisted Bottom.
- JOHN** Well we could still have a fete.

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- JOSIE** I think a Pageant is just what Muddlewick wants, it will bring prosperity to the town.
- FREDA** The whole history of Muddlewick is built around the Battle of Twisted Bottom and the presentation of the Jewelled Cudgel.
- TOM** Yus, the Diamond Donger.
- JOHN** I think it should be sold. No one ever sees it. Sell it and spend the money on a new scout hut.
- FREDA** Never, The Donger er! Cudgel must be saved for posterity.
- JANIS** Didn't Josie say it should be kept for prosperity
- JOHN** No, it's kept because of the Twisted Posterior, isn't it?
- TOM** Anyway I wish I had it, I'd sell it.
- JOHN** It should go to the youngsters and they need a new scout hut.
- FREDA** Never, never.
- JOHN** It's all right for you, you've got a new guide hut built with lottery funds and you should really share it with us.
- FREDA** Why, if you won the lottery would you share it with me?
- JOHN** Cos he wouldn't, he'd be gone, so would I, I'd be on my hoss and away like a shot. Never to worry about poor harvests like the last three. What would you do Mary?
- MARY** Well, I must admit, there's quite a bit to do to the house, and the garden, and the Rover really has had it.
- JOHN** (*To Freda*) I Suppose you'd buy new tents or something else for the guides?
- FREDA** As a matter of fact I'm hoping to give my daughter the wedding she deserves. I would like it to be remembered just as the saga of Twisted Bottom has been remembered.